

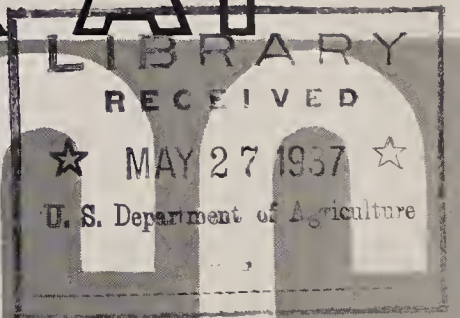
Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

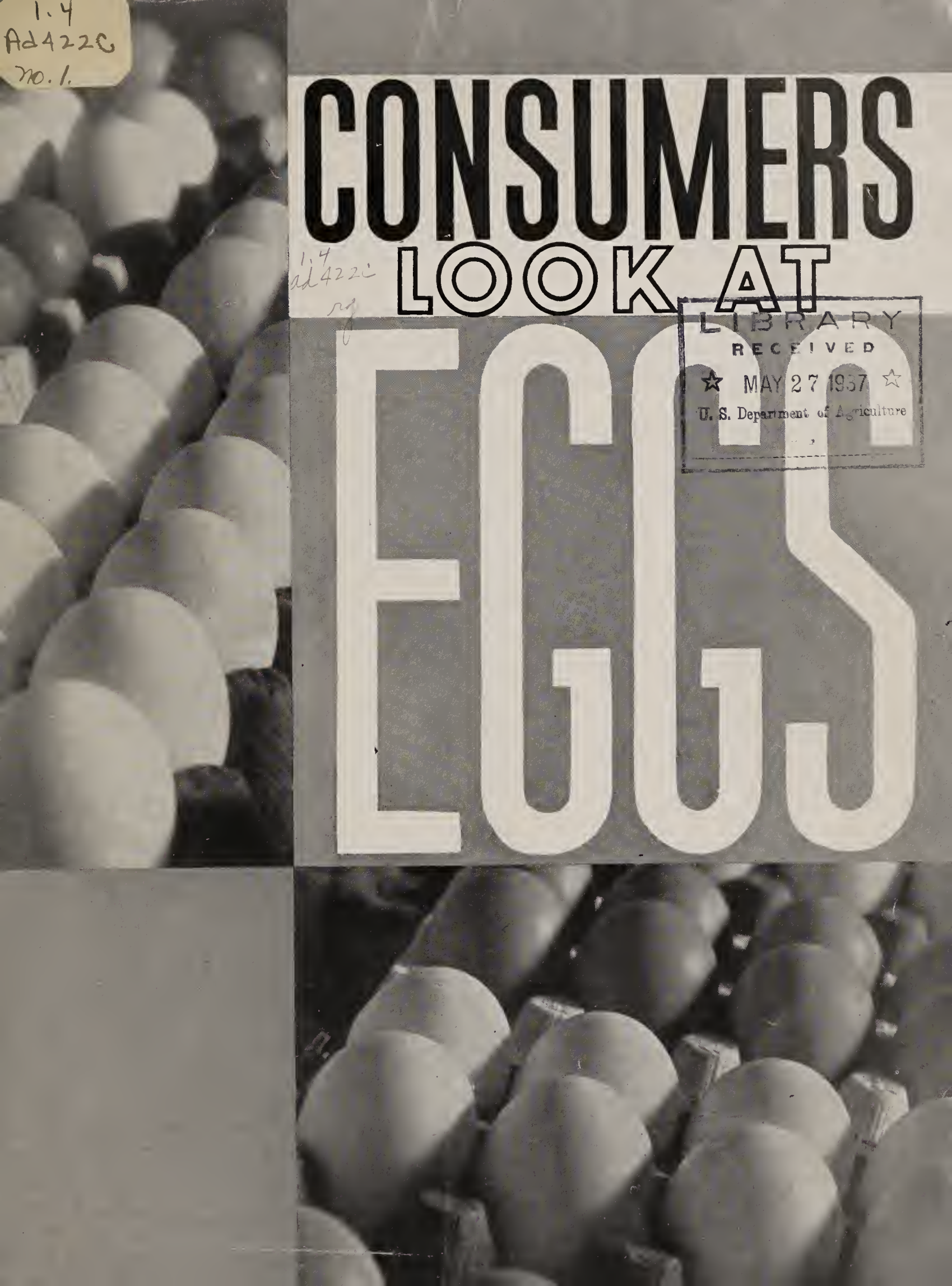
1.4
Ad422C
no. 1.

CONSUMERS LOOK AT

1.4
ad422c
ry



EGGS



PREPARED BY CONSUMERS' COUNSEL DIVISION, AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT ADMINISTRATION
AND CONSUMERS' PROJECT, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR WASHINGTON, D. C., MAY 1937

*Additional copies may be obtained from Supt. of
Documents, Gov't Printing Office for 10¢ each.*

NUMBER ONE OF A SERIES OF CONSUMER STUDY OUTLINES

WHAT ARE CONSUMER PROBLEMS?

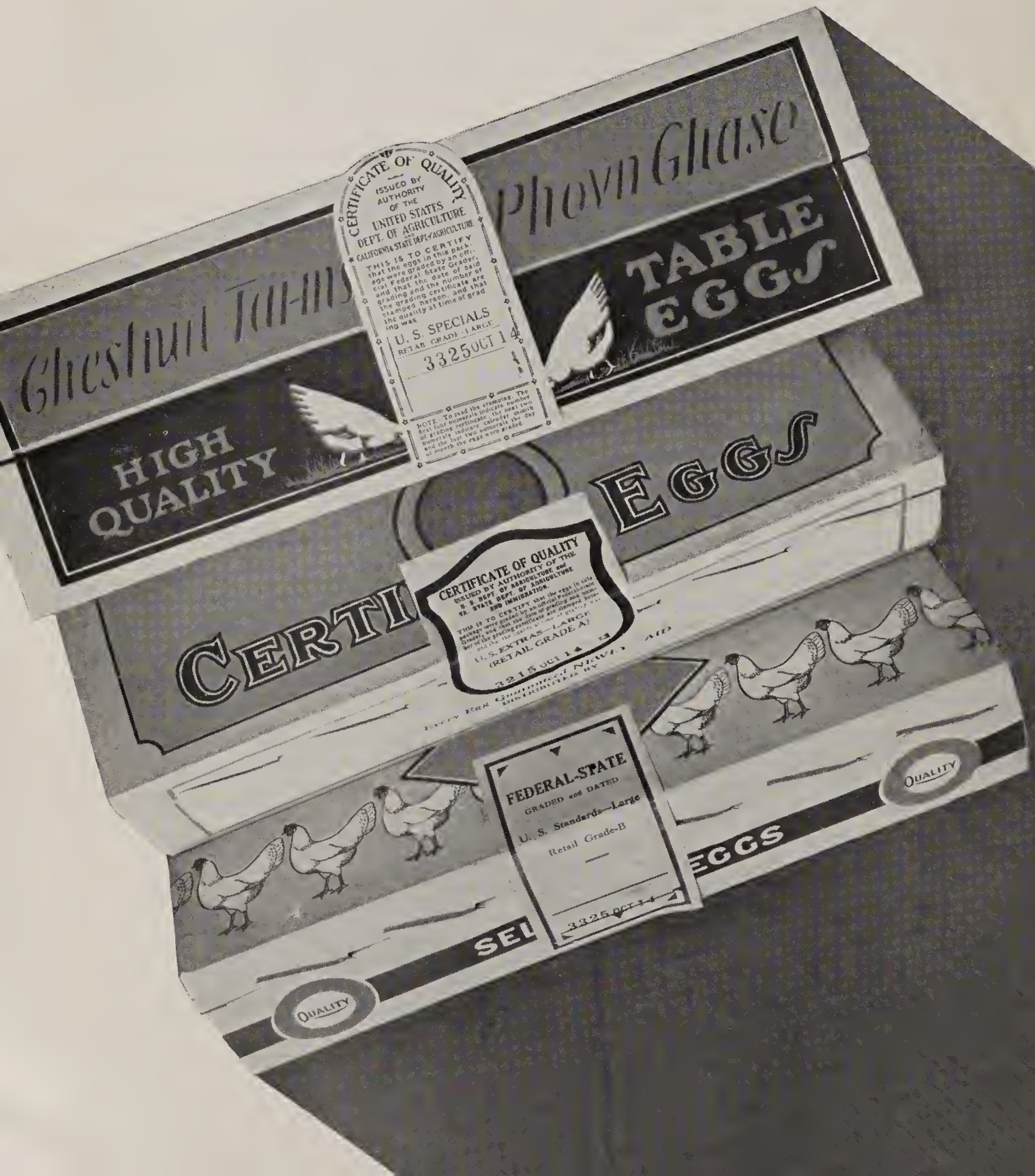
IN THE purchase of goods and services every consumer wants one, or a combination, of three things: (1) The best *quality* for a specified sum of money, (2) the greatest *quantity* for a specified sum of money, (3) a specified quantity and quality at a fair *price*.

The goal of consumers in the market place is an increasing quantity of goods, of known quality, available at fair prices. Another consumer problem is that of learning how best to utilize goods and services so as to obtain the greatest possible satisfaction from them.

This summary of suggestions for two programs on consumer problems in purchasing eggs has been prepared in response to the rapidly growing demand from clubs, discussion groups, schools, labor organizations, and cooperatives for study material.

Its purpose is to enable a group of consumers to discuss constructively ways in which they as individual buyers can obtain the objectives named above. No attempt is made to explore into the larger consumer questions on basic costs of production and distribution.

CONSUMERS LOOK AT



EGGS...

NATURE seldom wraps up in a single packet of food such a large number of the minerals and vitamins our bodies need as it does in an egg. Nutritionists say that, like milk, an egg is one of nature's prize foods.

Eggs are a foundation food, unique because they have everything within them that is necessary to develop and feed new life. Doctors prescribe an egg yolk a day for babies from the seventh month or before. The baby needs its iron and he needs its vitamin A to help him fight infectious diseases—colds, sinus trouble, tuberculosis; he needs its vitamin D to protect him against rickets, to help him grow in the first years.

Chicks have one advantage over human consumers; they can get their necessary

calcium from the shell of the egg. We have to get our calcium from some other food like milk. Aside from calcium and vitamin C, however, eggs have a rich supply of most food substances which human bodies need for growth and development. Highly important is their supply of the sunshine vitamin D. Only a few foods contain that valuable vitamin. Fish liver oils, of course, are richest in it. Now that poultrymen producing on a big scale are feeding vitamin-enriched diet to their hens, consumers stand a better chance than ever of getting eggs in which vitamins A and D are high.

Flavor, as well as price, has much to do with consumers' enthusiasm for eggs, and wise poultrymen know this. That's behind some of the most important new

developments in egg business to protect the freshness of the eggs you buy, because freshness affects flavor.

Here is a sample of what is being done. Instead of delivering eggs to stores in the same trucks with other supplies, some merchants bring eggs each morning to retail stores by special truck with odorless humidified refrigeration. Fresh eggs show little shrinkage of egg contents inside the shell. Humidity prevents that shrinkage. Some big egg distributors are now collecting eggs from farmers each night in these refrigerated trucks, and farmers are urged to gather their eggs three or four times a day to minimize their exposure to heat.

Distance from markets is coming to have little importance in egg freshness. Eggs that start to market from far away may be even fresher, because of special care taken in transporting them, than ones

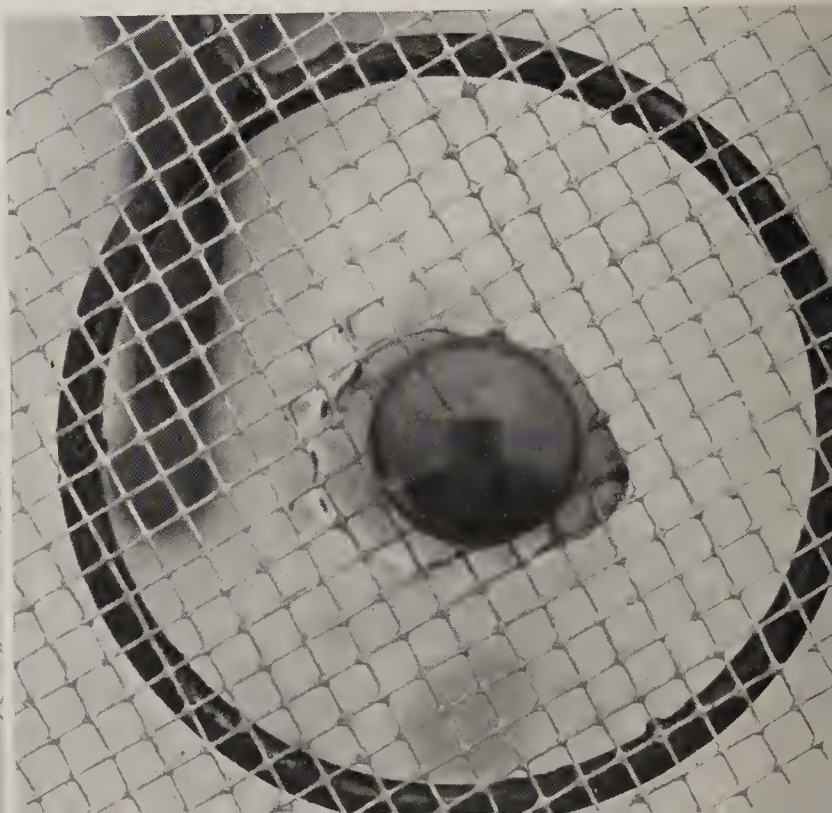
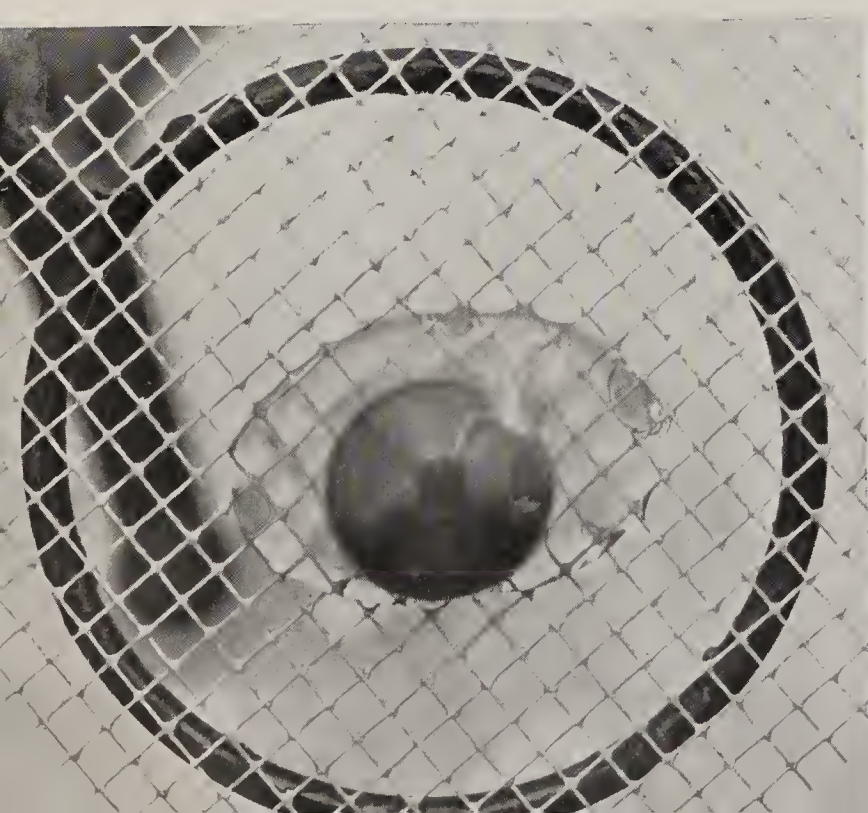
produced close by and moved to market unrefrigerated. Modern refrigeration and improved methods of production and handling are removing the basis for jokes aimed at cold storage eggs. There is little reason why short-held cold-storage eggs, of fine quality when stored and properly refrigerated, should not taste quite as delicious as fresh-laid ones.

Grading takes the guess out of buying eggs. Thousands of eggs are graded every year by experts from the Department of Agriculture. Eggs so graded are sold with a seal on the carton which gives the grade name of the eggs and the date when the eggs were graded. Some distributors of Government-graded eggs mark the carton "not to be sold after (date)."

The four grades set up by the Department of Agriculture are:

U. S. Special.—The kind to buy for con-

1



valescents; very few on the market; may be marked "Retail Grade AA." Seldom found on retail markets.

U. S. Extra.—Top grade in most markets; satisfactory for breakfast eggs; may be marked "Retail Grade A."

U. S. Standard.—Satisfactory for cooking; if sold under seals authorized by the Department of Agriculture must be marked "Retail Grade B."

U. S. Trade.—Suitable for preparing dishes where egg flavor does not count much.

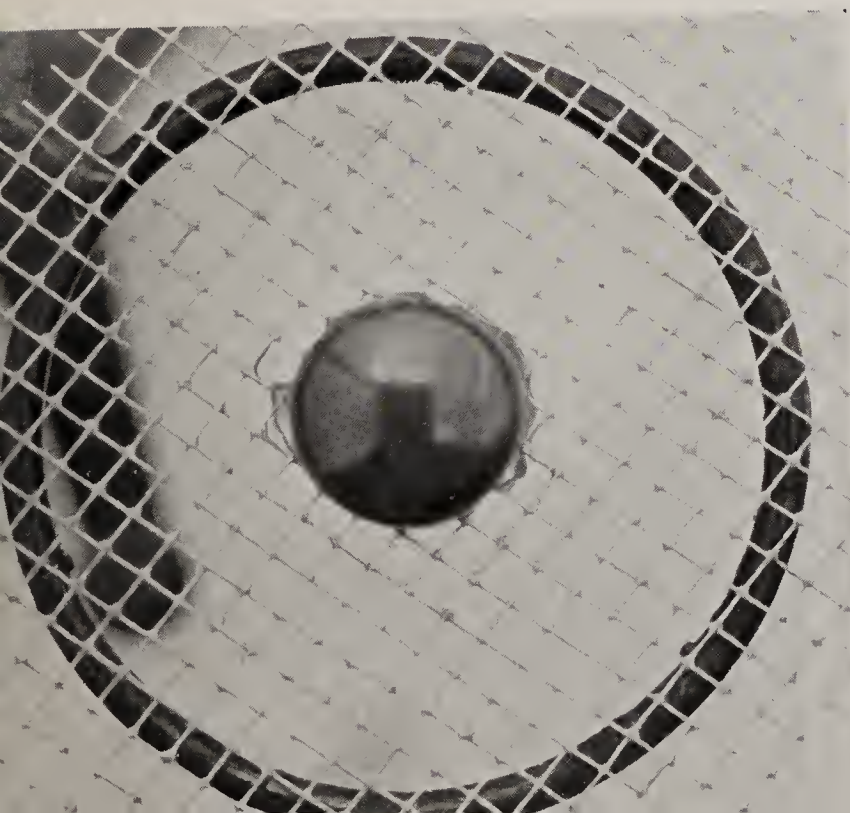
Under the egg regulations of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics all these grades may be accorded to storage eggs as well as fresh ones. Storage eggs of the two top grades, U. S. Specials and U. S. Extras, however, must be labeled as storage eggs when sold under authorized seals. Storage eggs of the third grade, U. S.

Standard or Grade B, are not required by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics to bear an identifying mark of storage on the seal, but under Food and Drug Administration regulations storage eggs of whatever grade which are shipped as "Fresh eggs" in interstate commerce are considered misbranded.

Services of Government egg graders are available to any egg dealer willing to pay for the small cost involved—about one-fifth of a cent per dozen.

Grading of eggs by the Department of Agriculture is done only at the request of shippers and marketing agencies. Ten States, however, make egg grading compulsory. These States are New York, California, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, and Wyoming. Grade designations vary in different States. Thus,

3



1 If the yolk stands up round like a ball, if the white is clear and holds firmly around the yolk, then it is an excellent egg. U. S. Extras, or "Retail Grade A", look like this.

2 Whites begin to thin as eggs step down in quality. Much of the white in this egg was thin enough to slip through the wire mesh. Such an egg would classify as U. S. Standard, or "Retail Grade B."

3 Low quality eggs have whites so thin that they slip entirely through the wires. An egg graded as U. S. Trade would look like this. Such an egg is suitable for cooking dishes where egg flavor does not count so much.

"A" is top grade in one State; in another it is second. It pays to be acquainted with egg legislation in your own State.

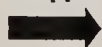
Canada credits grading with stepping up egg consumption, to the benefit not only of consumers but of producers. Our average consumption per person is somewhere around 252 eggs a year, a little less than seven-tenths of an egg a day. In Canada, the average is about 360, close to an egg a day. Grading in Canada is compulsory. In the United States it is voluntary, as far as Federal requirements are concerned, but more consumers are coming to ask for grading. More merchants are coming to value it.

Size of eggs, too, is important. Every consumer knows what a gamble he takes on the amount of egg in a dozen unless he buys the graded kind. United States Government grades specify the weight and size of the eggs in the top three grades. Under present requirements, if "U. S. Specials", "U. S. Extras", are sold under certificates of quality, or "U. S. Standards" are sold under seals, they are identified as "Large", "Medium", or "Small." "Large" eggs must weigh 24 ounces to the dozen; "Medium" eggs, 20½ ounces; "Small" eggs, 17 ounces to the dozen. Requirements for uniformity of size of eggs within each dozen vary accord-

Color of eggshell means only breed of hen;
it means nothing about flavor or food value ↓



Careful farmers keep eggs
in cool places until shipped



↑ Trucks for transporting eggs
should be chilled and insulated

ing to the grade. In the case of "U. S. Specials", all 12 eggs must be uniform in size. "U. S. Extras" must be reasonably uniform. "U. S. Standards" may be variable in size. The 12 eggs in a dozen graded "U. S. Trades" may greatly vary.

Eggs should always be handled as a perishable delicacy. When you buy eggs, notice where your grocer goes to get them for you. If he gets them from the refrigerator, fine. But if he takes them from his shelves or the counter, beware. Some grocers even leave them in the window in the sun all day and sell them as "best" eggs. Remember that they won't stay fresh many days if left on

↓ At home eggs should always be kept covered and in a cool place



your kitchen table. And remember, too, that eggs may absorb not only the odor of your grocer's onions but the potent fragrance of the onions in your own refrigerator.

There is one simple way you can get U. S. graded eggs. Just ask your grocer. His job is to give you what you want. Eventually he will give you Government-graded eggs if you ask for them. His distributor will make use of the Government-grading service. Government graders will "candle" and classify the eggs, then seal the cartons with the grade certificate which carries the date of grading for every housewife to read.

PLANNING THE COURSE

PREPARATION for each meeting should be made by the group leader. Read through the plans for each meeting well in advance of the time the group gathers. Have in hand, ready to distribute to individual members, any reference material on which they are to report at a later meeting.

LEADER'S PREPARATION

GATHER the following reference materials to be given out at the close of the first meeting. This material can be obtained free by writing to the Consumers' Counsel Division, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, or to the Con-

sumers' Project, Department of Labor, both in Washington, D. C.

"Handbook of Official United States Standards for Individual Eggs", Bureau of Agricultural Economics, June 1935. Ask for two copies.

"Do You Know Your Egg Laws"? CONSUMERS' GUIDE, February 24, 1936. Ask for two copies.

"Keeping Fresh Eggs Fresh", CONSUMERS' GUIDE, September 21, 1936.

On page 13 are listed the local offices of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics where officials in charge of egg grading are located. A consumer group in or near these cities may be able to arrange with the officer in charge to have a specialist talk at the first meeting on the Federal egg grading service.

FIRST MEETING

THE purpose of this meeting is to suggest ways of studying how consumers can get the quality and quantity of eggs for the money they have to spend and to acquaint the group with the services of the Government.

1. Talk by leader (based on introductory pages and the reference material collected), or a specialist from a local office of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. (See page 13 for offices.)

Describe the characteristics of a good egg and tell how the handling of eggs affects their quality.

Describe the egg grades set up by Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Federal Department of Agriculture.

Describe briefly the standards for eggs set up by various States.

2. Instructions to group for second meeting.

(a) Ask each member to write down the following information regarding a dozen eggs purchased and used during the time preceding the next meeting. (Eggs should be kept in a refrigerator between the time they are purchased and used.)

(1) Brand name.

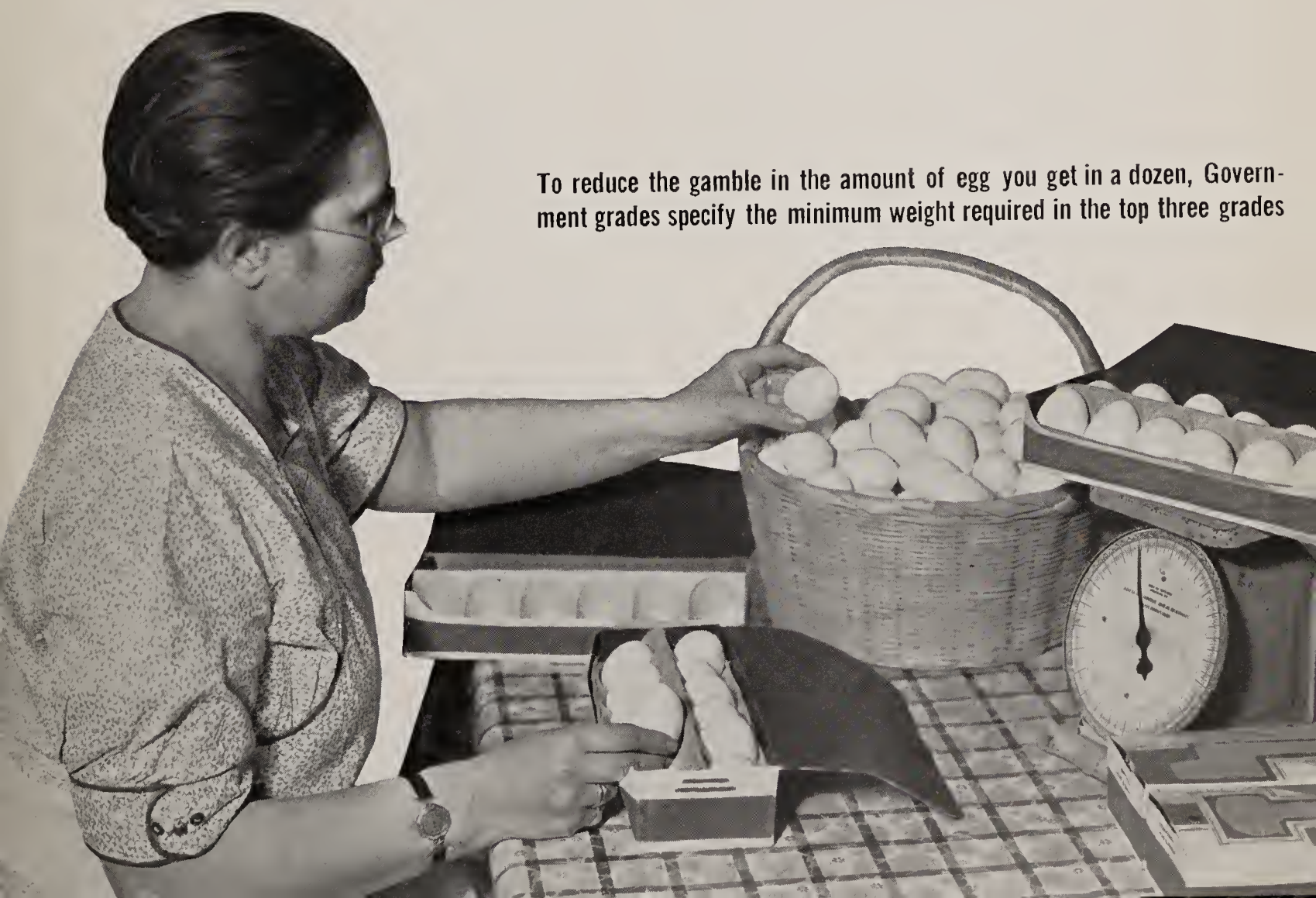
(2) Store at which purchased.

(3) Price per dozen.

(4) What were the statements on the carton, either direct or by implication, regarding the quality of the eggs? If no such statements were given, what were the statements of the grocer regarding quality?

(5) How many eggs in the dozen did you consider below the quality described on the carton or by the grocer?

(6) What was the weight of the eggs? (Have your grocer weigh the eggs at the time you purchase them, deducting the weight of the container.)



To reduce the gamble in the amount of egg you get in a dozen, Government grades specify the minimum weight required in the top three grades

(7) What was the cost of the eggs per ounce?

Arrangements should be made so that the purchases of the members will be made at different stores, representing both chain and independent markets, and be of different sizes and prices.

(b) Assign the following topics to five members to be reported on at the second meeting.

(1) What are U. S. Government Egg Grades?

The person responsible for this report should explain clearly the meaning of the different grade designations, U. S. Special, U. S. Extra, U. S. Standard, and U. S. Trade, as well as the letters AA, A, and B, which are sometimes used with them. If no graded eggs are sold locally, the report will have to be limited to this description of the grades.

Reference.—"Handbook of Official United States Standards for Individual Eggs."

(2) Are graded eggs available in your markets?

The person to whom this topic is assigned should canvass the local stores to see if any carry Government-graded eggs. If so, she should make a list of the stores and their locations to give to the group. She may want to arrange for other members to help in making a thorough survey.

(3) What is your State law regarding eggs?

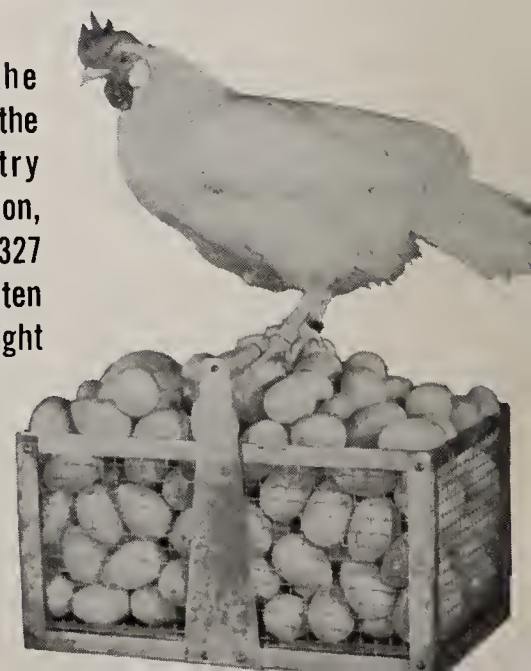
The person responsible for this assignment should write to the State department of agriculture and ask for a copy of the State law, how it is enforced, and how much money is appropriated for its enforcement. The latter is an important point. Many good State laws are almost valueless because insufficient money is appropriated for enforcement. If no egg law exists in your State, the person reporting on this topic might give a brief résumé of egg legislation in other States.

Reference.—"Do You Know Your Egg Laws?", CONSUMERS' GUIDE, February 24, 1936.

(4) What does egg weight mean to consumers?

The person responsible for this topic should consult the article "Do You Know Your Egg Laws?" and report on the regulations in your State, if any, regarding the weight of eggs. Compare these requirements with those of the Federal egg-grade

1936's "Hen of the Year", chosen at the Northeastern Poultry Producers' Exposition, produced a total of 327 eggs in one year, or ten times her own weight



standards described in the introduction to this study course. There are several ways in which she may dramatize the significance of egg weight. One would be to buy several brands of eggs, all supposedly of the same quality and the same size, and report to the group the differences in weight between the various dozens, and also the differences in cost per ounce. Another would be to buy a dozen large and a dozen small (pullet) eggs of the same quality and report the difference in weight of the two and also the difference in cost per ounce.

(5) A brief report on improvements made in the storage of eggs.

Reference.—"Keeping Fresh Eggs Fresh", CONSUMERS' GUIDE, September 21, 1936.

LEADER'S PREPARATION FOR SECOND MEETING

AN actual demonstration of the physical differences in egg quality should be given at the second meeting. For this purpose, the best exhibits are sample dozens of eggs sold under State or Federal-Government grades. If it is possible to buy such eggs in your community, bring to the meeting at least two eggs of each of three grades. If Federally graded eggs are available, bring two eggs of each of three grades, such as U. S. Extra, U. S. Standard, and U. S. Trade.

If no graded eggs can be found, the demonstration will have to be made with eggs you have prepared for the meeting. In advance of the meeting, purchase a half dozen eggs which you believe to be of the best quality. For 3 days, keep two of these eggs in the refrigerator. Leave two more in a room of ordinary temperature. The last two keep near a stove or radiator where there is more concentrated heat. Mark each of the eggs so that you can easily identify how each has been treated.

Bring these eggs to the meeting, and also six flat saucers into which the eggs can be broken.

SECOND MEETING

THE purpose of this meeting is to summarize all available information on how consumers in your community can get their money's worth in eggs.

1. Demonstration of egg quality.

When the group has gathered, the leader should spread out the six saucers, and place in each, one of the unbroken eggs. If she has been able to get U. S. Government-graded eggs, explain to the group the three grades represented by the eggs, and let them examine the outside of the eggs. If ungraded eggs, explain how the eggs have been kept during the past week.

Break each egg open carefully and put on a saucer. Ask the group to

observe the differences in yolk and white between the three pairs of eggs. In top quality eggs, the yolk should stand up rounded, be approximately in the center of the white, free from blood, and of uniform color. The white should be firm and stand up well around the yolk, not weak and watery with a tendency to spread; it should be clear and free from discoloration.

2. Tabulate information on egg purchases.

A suggested form of tabulating the record which each member has made of her egg purchases since the last meeting appears on page 13. If convenient, use a blackboard to list the data.

When all data are listed, the group should discuss the following points:

(a) What percentage of the eggs bought by the group were sold under Federal grade labels? What percentage under State grade labels?

(b) What percentage of eggs sold under *no* State or Federal grade was found to be below the quality as described by the grocer?

(c) How much variation in price was there between eggs sold under the same grade label?

(d) Considering the cost of the eggs per ounce, which were the cheapest? What is the quality of the cheapest eggs? What is the quality of the most expensive eggs?

3. Ask the five members to whom topics were assigned at the previous meeting to report to the group. Follow their reports by a general discussion in the course

of which the following questions should be answered:

(a) How should an egg be handled from the time it is laid until the time it is prepared for eating?

(b) Are storage eggs always of inferior quality?

(c) Is the grading of eggs compulsory in your State?

(d) Are U. S. Government-graded eggs sold in your stores? Which stores?

(e) How do your State grades compare with the Federal grades for eggs?

(f) Are there any regulations regarding the weight of eggs sold in your State? How do they compare with the definitions of weight and size under U. S. standard grades?

(g) What are the advantages and disadvantages of two systems of grading, State and Federal?

(h) What are the advantages of grading, either Federal or State?

(i) If your stores do not sell graded eggs, how can you get them to sell such eggs?

NOTE TO LEADERS:

The Consumers' Counsel of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and the Consumers' Project of the Department of Labor would appreciate learning about your experience and that of your group in the use of this outline. Any criticisms or suggestions you may have will be useful to other groups and to these offices in preparing other study outlines.

Other study plans for consumer groups are in preparation. Announcement of their publication will be made in the CONSUMERS' GUIDE. If you wish to receive special notice of these bulletins, address your request to Consumers' Counsel Division, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, or Consumers' Project, Department of Labor, Washington, D. C.

TABLE FOR GRADING EGGS

[illegible]

BRANCH OFFICES FOR EGG GRADING, BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

BOSTON, MASS.

408 Atlantic Avenue,
N. A. DAKIN.

CHICAGO, ILL.

1103 New Post Office Building,
C. L. PIER.

COLUMBUS, OHIO

% Bureau of Markets,
RAY C. WISEMAN.

JACKSONVILLE, FLA.

Florida State Marketing Bureau,
R. W. RISHER.

LAFAYETTE, IND.

Purdue Agricultural Experiment Station,
E. R. MENEFFEE.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF.

300 Wholesale Terminal Building,
A. G. ABELL.

NEW YORK, N. Y.

641 Washington Street,
L. F. CHAMPLIN.

OMAHA, NEBR.

% Omaha Cold Storage Co.,
Dr. R. B. MERICLE.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

604-C Customhouse Building,
H. A. RUST.

PORTLAND, OREG.

337 U. S. Courthouse,
R. S. SMITH.

RICHMOND, VA.

Division of Markets, HOLLIS SHOMO.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

Room 3, Ferry Building,
F. H. McCAMPBELL.

SEATTLE, WASH.

508 Federal Office Building,
E. R. JOHNSON.

ST. LOUIS, MO.

229 Merchants Exchange,
B. W. KEMPERS.

WASHINGTON, D. C.

2915 South Building,
Department of Agriculture,
ROY C. POTTS.

CONSUMERS' *Guide*

EVERY two weeks the office of Consumers' Counsel, Agricultural Adjustment Administration publishes an illustrated bulletin of information for consumers of agricultural products. This bulletin reports on changes in prices and costs of farm commodities and relates them to changes in urban and farm income. It aims to aid consumers in making wise and economical purchases by giving information on quality standards and specifications, on seasonal supplies and prices, on nutrition standards and budgeting plans, on methods of utilizing and conserving foods, on safeguards against adulterated and misbranded foods. It reports on cooperative efforts made by groups of consumers to obtain the greatest possible value for their expenditures.

Subscription to the CONSUMERS' GUIDE is free. Requests for copies should be addressed to the Consumers' Counsel, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.